

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 4AWASHINGTON TIMES
5 May 1985

The facts are weapons in disinformation war

By Bill Kling
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Factual news reporting and educated public awareness are the best defensive weapons the Free World's nations have to fight subversive Soviet disinformation, a French scholar said here last night.

"Against disinformation, the counter-poison is information — information through education at school, but also through accuracy in the media," according to Jean-Marie Benoist, founder of the Paris-based European Center for International Relations and Strategy.

"The riposte of democracies against such a danger cannot be censorship or seclusion. This temptation would be a trap."

Mr. Benoist, author, democratic theorist and senior research fellow at the College of France in Paris, said Soviet disinformation "is not only the transmission of lies and false news through the usual channels of communication.

"It also consists of subverting the moral values of a country and inflicting guilt on some nations or people to make them more vulnerable to propaganda and to political moves which are weakening them," he said in a dinner speech at a Washington Plaza Hotel conference of the National Republican Institute for International Affairs.

"Subverting our moral standards and manipulating opinion are connected operations in this field of disinformation," he said.

The institute was created by the Republican Party to engage in international political development authorized by the National Endow-

ment for Democracy Act, enacted in 1983. A similar program has been established by the Democratic Party.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, was conference keynote speaker at a luncheon yesterday.

"The ideal pattern of disinformation is the one in which the victim becomes the author of its own intoxication," Mr. Benoist said.

"Massaging the Vietnam guilt in the American mind to make the U.S. pull out of Lebanon has been combined with the use of the worst kind of terrorism. And the deep structure which is created leads to a wish for isolation [concerning] Nicaragua and soon about the U.S. presence in Europe, specifically in Germany," he said.

"Disinformation has [caused] white elites — intellectuals, singers, artists — to carry on their shoulders the guilt for starvation in Ethiopia because nobody dared say that this starvation was organized systematically by the Marxist-Leninist regime [in Addis Ababa]."

It is essential, he said, for free nations — in order to maintain freedom — to engage "in reminding the public, in a palatable fashion, what the true nature of communism is," as well as to use such outlets as Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and Radio Marti as "means of fighting against disinformation abroad in the countries submitted to communist rule."

The conference, "The Totalitarian Threat to Democracy," continues today.